DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 443 914 UD 033 697

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TITLE	Multicultural Education: Minorities in the Athletic and Academic Arenas.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	10p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; *Athletics; Cultural Awareness; Ethnicity; Higher Education; *Minority Groups; Multicultural Education; *Recognition (Achievement); Role Models; Secondary Education

ABSTRACT

The academic accomplishments of minorities are not as well known as their athletic accomplishments. In the new millennium, the barriers that limit the expression of true academic acumen of women, African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans must be minimized. This paper deals with ways minorities in the athletic and academic areas can further advance the cause of true multiculturalism. The paper offers suggestions about how to achieve a greater recognition of the contributions of minorities in academics as well as athletics. Minority athletes should continue to give back to their ethnic communities as they increase their emphasis on economic development. Minority athletes must make wise choices and remember that they are role models. Minorities in the academic arena should work toward true multicultural education, and those who develop curriculum should emphasize the contributions of minorities to society. (Contains 18 references.) (SLD)

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Abstract

Minorities' academic accomplishments are not as well known as their athletic accomplishments. In the new millennium, the barriers that limit the expression of true academic acumen of women, African-Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans must be minimized. This paper will deal with ways minorities in the athletic and academic arenas can further advance the cause of true multiculturalism. The authors will offer suggestions to show how a greater recognition of minorities' contributions in academics as well as athletics can be achieved.

Introduction

Numerous minority high school and college athletic students' accomplishments helped to bring positive press and thousands of dollars to their institutions. Minorities attending these institutions have helped to advance the cause of multiculturalism. Many minorities in the athletic arenas have been able to advance economically, socially and accepted by the dominant culture in many instances more readily than most others in the culture of the popular athlete. The contributions of minorities to the academic arena and to the nation outside the athletic arena are recognized at a slower pace. The accomplishments of George Washington Carver, Dr. Martin Luther King, Dr. Booker Whatley and General Colin Powell are often viewed as exceptions rather than the norm. The success of Carver, Whatley and Booker Washington has been key to more of the mass recognizing Tuskegee University.

America's multicultural education movement is the result of national awareness of the academic needs of all students in our culturally diverse society (Duhon-Sells, 1992). Several authors defined multicultural education in its true essence (Banks, 1997; Glazer, 1997; Kendall, 1996; Banks, 1995; Sleeter and Grant, 1994 and Nieto, 1999). They defined multicultural education as an idea, an educational reform movement, a process whose major goal is to change the structure of the educational institutions so that students regardless of gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity or cultural group, would have equal access and equality of opportunity.
Since the 1900's, alternating movement toward cultural assimilation and toward cultural pride has characterized the United States. Ramsey *et al,* (1989), stated that the educational evolution of our society is constant and continuing process. (See Table 1).

McCormick (1984); Gay (1983); Banks (1979,1981) stated that the civil rights and women's movements of the 1960's and 1970's gave birth to multicultural education. Subsequently, the development of non-racist and non-sexist curricula provided the

stimulus for the first multicultural education program. They believed that these shifts in educational patterns have been in response to social, economical and political needs rather that the educational needs of children. Table 1 depicts the evolution of our education attitudes and practices toward a cultural pluralistic society. The "Melting Pot Theory" of the 1900's was designed to have all ethnic or cultural groups lose their individual identities and blend and adopt the dominant culture's value system. The "Melting Pot Theory" which focused on a monocultural education, dominant schools curricula, emphasizing assimilation and curriculum content drawn from Western Europe. In the 1970's, the "Salad Bowl Theory" prevailed. Multicultural approaches to education were at the heart of this era. Walker, 1992 proposed the "Gumbo Theory" as a paradigm that could be used alone or inconjunction with the "Salad Bowl Theory." Walker proposed the "Gumbo Theory" as the next stage in the multicultural education movement (See table 2). The fundamental tenet of this theory is that multicultural education grows while there is a heterogeneous focus on cultural pride, cultural pluralism, assimilation and acculturation.

Table 1. The Evolution of Educational Attitudes and Practices Toward Cultural Pluralism in America.

Phases	Year	*Paradigm
1. The "Melting Pot"	1900	(1.) Monocultural education dominated schools (2.) Focus on assimilation (3.) Curriculum content drawn from Western Europe
II. The push toward "Anglo Conformity"	1920	(1.) Monocultural education (2.) Focus on acculturation and similarity
III. A move toward desegregation	1950	(1.) Intergroup education was promoted (2.) Pressure to eliminate the separate but equal doctrine
IV. A move toward ethnic pride	1965	(1.) Ethnic education as a separate course or subject
V. The "Salad Bowl"	1975	(1.) Multicultural approach to education appears

Source: Excerpts from Ramsey, et. al. 1989

Table 2. A Suggested Depiction of Multicultural Education Focus in the 2000's.

Phase	Paradigm
I. A focus on cultural pride	(1.) A focus on cultural pride and patriotism
II. The "Gumbo Theory"	(1.) Multicultural education grows (2.) Heterogeneous focus on cultural pride, cultural pluralism, assimilation and acculturation

Source: Excerpts from Walker, 1992

Proponents of multicultural education have a variety of points of focus. Sleeter and Grant (1994), stated that multicultural education means different things to different people. People do not always agree on what forms of diversity are to be addressed by multicultural education. Some think only about racial or cultural diversity, while others concentrate on gender, social class and additional forms of diversity. At the same time, many people who discuss gender equity, for examples, share concern similar to those of multicultural advocates, but virtually ignore race and culture. Regardless, the core of any multicultural education focus should be equal access and equality of opportunity.

Minorities in the Athletic Arena

Minorities, particularly African-Americans and Hispanics, are prominent in sports such as football (Steve McNair, Jerry Rice, Deion Sanders, Reggie White), basketball (Michael Jordan, Shaquille O'Neal, Kobe Bryant and Grant Hill), and baseball (Ken Griffey, Jr., Sammy Sosa, Pedro Martinez and Derrick Jeter). It is common to see white children and adults wearing jerseys of these individuals.

Conversely, it is common to see minorities' children and adults wearing the jerseys of predominately majority race universities. Why? Because they have a favorite player or team that represents that university. It is also common to see organizations and individuals of the majority race host benefits and fund raising events during which they raffle a jersey, bat or ball of minority athlete as well as an athlete of their own cultural group.

<u>Suggestions for Minorities in the Athletic Arena in the New Millenium</u>

(1.) Minority athletes must continue to give back to their ethnic comminutes while reaching out across ethnic groups to be good citizens. The minority athlete's fans are not limited to any particular ethnic or cultural group.

(2.) Minority athletes should increase their emphasis on economic development.

(3.) Minority athletes should invest their financial resources wisely. Investments in business ventures such as banking, television, radio, ownership of teams, head

coaches, food stores, fast food franchises, restaurants and real estate are wise. Developing parks and recreational programs should be continued.

(4.) Minority athletes should bring some of their white and other ethnic counterparts back to their communities for fund raising events and community service activities. Let diversity be shown beyond one's own ethnic group or workplace.

(5.) Achieving success despite the odds helps to bring recognition and exposure. Success and true recognition can be a slow process. Minority athletes must not lose sight of the road to their success. Golf and tennis are new grounds for African-Americans and Hispanics. Tiger Woods, and sisters Venus and Serena Williams have earned the public's respect for diligence, tenacity and dedication. However, if they forget their ethnic heritage someone will remind them of their ethnicity. Despite being a member of a minority group they will, whether they like it or not, be emulated. Minority athletes are role models so they must strive to exhibit good citizenship.

Society has given minority athletes a special status and they have a responsibility to be careful of their actions and the image that they project to the public. Minority athletes must continue to strive to make wise choices in their friends. They must also learn to make appropriate responses toward their foes.

(6.) Minority athletes must continue to strive to determine their friends and foes before it is too late and costly. The more fame and economic interdependence the more difficult the challenge to find real friends.

Minorities in the Academic Arena

Duhon-Sells, 1992 stated that multicultural education thrust should be implemented so that teachers can learn to utilize the unique cultural assets of their students in creating a learning environment that will be beneficial to all students regardless of their backgrounds. In the academic arena, contributions of minorities are not as widely recognized as athletic accomplishments. Generally, academic accomplishments are known within a small sphere. Hopefully, the new millenium will bring to the forefront the ethnic and cultural contributions of minorities to a large segment of society.

The scope of multicultural education is broad and is continuing to expand. Many writers have shown that multicultural education includes, but is not limited to, the experiences of racial groups, class, age, sexual orientation and religious groups (Wedge & Cowell, 1990; Ramsey *et. al.*, 1989; Sleeter & Grant, 1988; Gay, 1983; and Gold *et. al.*, 1984).

Multicultural education advocates must be reminded that racial and sexual classifications are the major focal points that have been used to impede the

American Dream of many cultural groups. These two classification factors are required on a myriad of materials ranging from an individual's birth certificate to driver's license to death certificate.

Suggestions for Minorities in the Academic Arena for the New Millennium

(1.) A successful multicultural education outreach in the 2000's must be holistic in nature. All segments of our society must reflect the cultural pluralism of our nation. The changes must be more than rhetorical and deeper that food, facts and famous individuals of different cultural groups.

(2.) Standardized tests will continue to be culturally biased. Multicultural education proponents must continue seeking ways to make standardized tests more culturally friendly. At the same time, we must address the special needs of the minority students who take those tests. We must exert a greater effort to prepare the students to take and pass the tests. Standardized tests must not be permitted to become barriers to the progress of minority students. Golf rules are the same for Tiger Woods and Karen Webb. As they played and defeated numerous courses, they has bested the competition, now many golf superintendents have been changing their course to make them more challenging. The minority student must be instilled with the attitude that he or she must be prepared to meet and conquer the challenge of a standardized test or any other real or perceived barrier which separates them from their academic and other goals in life.

(3.) Teachers should develop their curriculum to at least note the contributions of ethnic minority cultures and women. For example, as we teach biology, agriculture, engineering etc, we should enhance our curricula to recognize the successes and contributions of minorities to the disciplines. American classrooms today are a microcosm of the universe (Pitts, 1992).

(4.) Incentives should be provided to authors of textbooks and to publishers who develop educational materials that focus on equality and with a fair depiction of cultural groups. The depictions should be beyond, food, fact and fun. We can print true accomplishments of women, Europeans and non-Europeans without losing the content of the subject matter.

(5.) It is reasonable to assume that an A or B student in high school can state 10 accomplishments in agriculture, biology, engineering, chemistry, urban forestry and education that was made by whites. However, if you ask that student to name 10 accomplishments of African-Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans and women, he or she would be hard pressed to respond correctly. Conversely, if you ask the same student to name 10 African-American athletes he or she could name them instantly. Certainly the contributions of minorities to the areas of agriculture, biology and engineering is vast. However, if that information is not taught, how would students know of them?

(6.) Local and national news telecasts should present five minutes segments on education or academic issues. Today, three to five minutes of each news telecast are devoted to the weather and another three to five minutes are devoted to sports. Why not three to five minutes on academic news? Educators and institutions would certainly submit enough news to make it a viable segment. Concerted efforts should be made to highlight innovations, accomplishments and milestones of all cultures, women and not just those of the dominant culture. All academic experts are not of one race.

(7.) Proponents of multicultural education should strive to push the notion of an "academic news channel." The channel could operate 24 hours each day, similar to C-SPAN, ESPN and CNN. Minority teachers in grades K-12 and colleges have noteworthy news. Minorities are making relevant contributions to science. Minorities are more than comedians, musicians and athletes.

When ESPN and CNN started, people scoffed at the idea or notion. Today, ESPN and CNN are two of the most watched channels on television. Isn't there weather channel? Isn't there a sports channel? Isn't there a cartoon channel? Isn't there a playboy channel? Why not an "academic news channel? "

(8.) Developers of multicultural education materials must be sensitive to the type of messages produced from teaching materials.

(9.) Use of folklore and literature of minorities as proposed by Sims & Martinez, 1981, should be considered.

(10.) Multicultural education must not be implemented as an "add-on" to the curriculum for minorities, it should be for all students.

Conclusion

Multiculturalism for minorities in the athletic and academic arenas in this millenium needs a bold and innovative focus and commitment. Both spheres can learn from each other and come up with ways both can work together for a cultural pluralistic society. Our efforts must not be like Mr. Chicken in the passage below.

> One day Mr. Chicken and Mr. Pig were walking along the road. They passed a sign that said, "annual church ham and eggs dinner." The chicken said, "come on pig, let's go in and help out, we can each make a donation to the ham and eggs dinner." The pig replied, "hold it chicken, I'm not going in because you would only be making a donation but they'd be asking me for a total commitment!"

In essence, equality and fair beyond words and rhetoric are needed for our world. It is up to people of Jewish, Asian, African-American, American Indian, Spanish, European ancestry, etc to rise up and bring about equality, truth and opportunity to this world. Continued distortions of any ethnic or culture group are inhumane. True

multicultural education or multiculturalism whether it is in the athletic or academic arenas are ways to bring about one nation and one truth.

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